

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS BRANCH

R & A 2984S
23 March 1945

THE NEW YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT

The amalgamation of the Royal Yugoslav Government-in-exile with the *de facto* Partisan administration inside Yugoslavia, long an aim of the major Allies, has been virtually completed with King Peter's appointment of a regency council on 2 March and the formation five days later of a coalition cabinet including Marshal Tito as Premier and former Premier Subasich as Foreign Minister. With the expected addition of some non-Partisan members, the Partisan Council (AVNOJ) is to constitute the legislative arm of the new provisional government. While these measures may be regarded as a fulfillment of Allied recommendations at Yalta, the recommendations themselves were the result of many months' labor, particularly on the part of the British and Soviet Governments.

Unification of the Partisan regime with the Royal Government was sought, not only for the sake of constitutional legality, but also because a substantial proportion of the Serb population loyal to King Peter has remained hostile to the Partisan movement. Allied attempts at unification had been beset by major difficulties. King Peter, consistently influenced by the conservative, pan-Serb politicians of his entourage, strongly resisted attempts to liberalize his regime or to curtail the royal power. The Partisan movement — representing a considerable military force which was not always amenable to Allied pressure — was anti-monarchist and hoped for a federal organization of Yugoslavia. It drew much of its strength from Croats, Slovenes, and those Serbs who opposed the prewar dictatorship of the royal house and who remain anti-dynastic. This conflict between pan-Serb policy and its federalist opponents, which had undermined the stability of the Yugoslav state before the war, contributed during the German occupation to the active hostility between the Nationalist guerrillas of Mihailovich (then King Peter's Minister of War) and the Communist-organized Partisans of Marshal Tito.

The first major step toward reconciliation of the Yugoslav factions came in May 1944 when King Peter, under strong British pressure, dismissed Mihailovich as Minister of War. According to British reports, the Partisans then constituted the only effective military force opposing the Germans in Yugoslavia, while at least part of Mihailovich's dwindling forces had been collaborating with the enemy. The second step, on 1 June 1944, was King Peter's dismissal, again under British pressure, of the pan-Serb, anti-Partisan cabinet of Premier Purich. In his place Ivan Subasich, a leading member of the Croat Peasant Party and former Ban

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of Croatia was brought to London from the United States to form a new government "with the help and support of all resistance elements in Yugoslavia." Simultaneously King Peter appealed for the postponement of all internal political issues until after the liberation of the country, when, he promised, his people would be "free to express their will regarding the internal organization of the state."

The appointment of Subasich, the first Croat Premier of Yugoslavia, was the result of a long and unsuccessful search for a political leader who would be acceptable to the King and his Serb supporters, to anti-monarchist Partisans, and to the three major Allies. The weakness of Subasich's position soon became apparent in his initial inability to form a cabinet in London. Early in June, however, Subasich held a series of meetings with Marshal Tito in Italy and on the British-garrisoned island of Vis, where Tito had fled after the German capture of his headquarters on the Yugoslav mainland. Tito's military reverses and his dependence on the British at Vis may have increased his willingness to negotiate with Subasich, who had strong British support. In an agreement signed on 16 June, Tito declared his intention of collaborating with the Royal Government, which would continue to represent the country in foreign affairs, while Subasich recognized Tito's military authority and the jurisdiction of his provisional government inside Yugoslavia. Subasich agreed to appoint to his cabinet only persons who had not opposed the Partisan movement and the issue of the monarchy was to be shelved for the duration of the war.

On 7 July Subasich was at last able to announce his cabinet which included one Croat beside himself, two Slovenes, and two Serbs. Two of his five ministers were Partisans named by Tito himself and a third was Partisan-sponsored. The chief task of the new government, aside from organizing Allied aid for Tito's forces and coordinating resistance activities, was considered to be that of winning over the Serb people. In this task, however, the cabinet was handicapped by its inability to obtain the participation of any Serb minister with substantial following in Serbia itself. Thus (the principal value of) the Subasich government has proved to be valuable principally as a transition regime.

The precariousness of Subasich's position was soon further emphasized by a perceptible cooling in Tito's attitude following his consultations with Partisan leaders, many of whom were allegedly reluctant to enter into any agreement whatsoever with the Royal Government. However, after considerable hesitation Tito was persuaded in mid-August to confer with both Churchill and Subasich at Caserta. He then agreed to submit to his Partisan Council a proposal for the eventual establishment of a single coalition government for Yugoslavia.

Meanwhile, although Tito's headquarters remained on Vis, Soviet influence in Yugoslavia was increasing with the rapid progress of the Red Army through the Balkans. On 19 September, shortly after the arrival of Soviet forces on the Yugoslav border, Tito, contrary to his understanding with the British, left Vis secretly at night in a Russian plane.

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Thereafter Allied policy on Yugoslavia seems to have been determined primarily in Moscow rather than in London.

Agreement on a joint Anglo-Soviet policy for "solution of Yugoslav internal difficulties by a union between the Royal Yugoslav Government and the National Liberation Movement" was announced from Moscow in a Churchill-Stalin statement of 21 October. The following month Subasich and Tito, in the presence of members of the Partisan Council, drew up a draft agreement for the formation of a united Yugoslav government. Thereupon Subasich, apparently feeling that an understanding with the Soviets was essential to Partisan implementation of the agreement, proceeded to Moscow, despite an urgent demand by Churchill to return to London first. Contrary to a reported understanding between Churchill and Stalin, Soviet approval of the agreement was announced before Subasich arrived back in London.

Subasich had been preceded, however, by rumors that the agreement included provision for a regency council pending the promised post-war plebiscite on the issue of the monarchy. King Peter, still under the influence of his pan-Serb advisors, expressed profound dissatisfaction with the trend of Yugoslav politics, and asserted emphatically that, whatever pressure Britain and the USSR might bring to bear, he would not accept a regency. Moreover, he felt that the British were preventing him from building up a political following of his own to serve as a democratic alternative to a Tito regime. Those whom the King mentioned as acceptable leaders were all either ultra-conservative politicians of the old school or pan-Serbs who had incurred intense Partisan hostility. This choice suggested either that Peter was politically uninformed or that he was contemplating an outright break with the Partisans.

Early in January the King, despite strong British pressure and growing expressions of impatience from Yugoslavia, publicly denounced the Tito-Subasich proposals for a regency and the delegation of the Partisan Council to function as the temporary legislative authority. Soon after, the King precipitated a new crisis by declaring that he had lost confidence in Premier Subasich and had requested his resignation. The action was taken despite Prime Minister Churchill's warning that if Peter's endorsement of the Tito-Subasich agreement were not forthcoming within a few days, "the matter... would have to go ahead, his assent being presumed." Before the end of the month, however, a temporary solution to this new crisis was achieved as a result of pressure from high British officials, and of violent anti-royalist outbursts from Partisan Yugoslavia. On 29 January Subasich resigned and was immediately reappointed by King Peter with specific instructions "to put in effect the agreement with the Movement of National Liberation." Simultaneously Peter announced that in order to facilitate conclusion of the agreement he would transfer his royal powers to a regency council to be appointed by himself.

Although King Peter continued to negotiate with Marshal Tito over appointments to the regency council, it was now increasingly apparent

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that the major decisions concerning Yugoslavia awaited settlement by the major powers at the impending Crimea Conference, and that Peter's influence would be confined largely to expressions of approval or disapproval.

The Yalta declaration of 12 February, besides advocating the amalgamation of the Royal Government with the Partisan regime, recommended the addition of members of the prewar Yugoslav Parliament to the Partisan Council in order to form a provisional legislative body. Immediately thereafter the King agreed to the speedy departure of Subasich and his cabinet for Belgrade. The long negotiations over the regency council ended on 2 March with Peter relinquishing his aim of making appointments of a political character. His final choice, from a list presented by Subasich and Tito, represents a victory for Tito's view that the regents should be non-political figures who would exercise only formal prerogatives. Faced by the fact that the Subasich cabinet had endorsed Tito's demands, and well aware of the unfavorable reaction both at home and abroad to the crises he had precipitated in London, King Peter apparently chose to yield on the regency rather than forfeit future Allied support.

Establishment of the regency was quickly followed by the resignations of the Subasich cabinet and the Partisan executive committee and by the announcement of the new coalition cabinet with Tito as Premier. In addition to Partisan leaders, the Tito cabinet includes Subasich as Foreign Minister and Milan Grol, leader of the prewar Serbian Democratic Party, as Vice Premier. The appointment of Grol, whom Tito had considered unacceptable for the post of regent, reflects Tito's continued desire to build up his following in Serbia. One of Grol's first acts following his appointment was to issue a strong statement emphasizing the independence of his Serbian Democratic Party and pleading for tolerance toward non-Partisans. Thus while the new cabinet contains a heavy Partisan majority, and while present Partisan domination of Yugoslavia is unlikely to be appreciably affected by the official amalgamation of the two regimes, the participation of Grol may win considerable support among those Serbs who have hitherto been indifferent or hostile to the Partisan movement.

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